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Stuart, Henry Harvey

New Brunswick report to the fourth annual...

[Newcastle, N.B.]

[1913]

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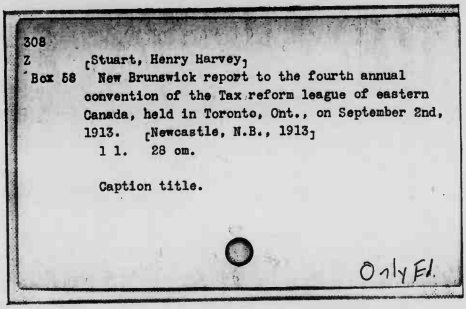
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Box 58 New Brunswick report to the fourth annual convention of the Tax reform league of eastern Canada, held in Toronto, Ont., on September 2nd, 1913. [Newcastle, N.B., 1913,]
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NEW BRUNSWICK

REPORT TO THE FOURTH ANNUAL CONVENTION....

Oxford
STOCK No. 152½
MADE IN U. S. A.

New Brunswick Report to the Fourth Annual Convention of the Tax Reform League of Eastern Canada.

308
Nov
58

Held in Toronto, Ont., on September 2nd, 1913

Officers and members of the Fourth Annual Convention of the Tax Reform League of Eastern Canada.

The agitation for Tax Reform in New Brunswick has gone steadily on since the third annual convention of the Eastern Canada Tax Reform League in Toronto last September.

In December, Mr. A. B. Farmer, secretary of the League, had a most successful lecturing tour of a week, speaking to large and interested audiences in Halifax, Middleton, Springhill, New Glasgow and Pictou, N. S., and in St. John, Newcastle and Moncton, N. B.

In February, Rev. W. C. Keirstead, Ph. D., professor of Philosophy and Economics in the University of New Brunswick, spoke before the Canadian Club in Moncton, advocating lower taxes on improvements and personalty than on land and demanding a system under which the community can lay its hands upon the unearned increment of land. The same question has been discussed at subsequent meetings of the Club and at the meetings of Moncton Tax Reform Association.

Later in February, the motion of J. L. White, M. P. P., at a meeting of Grand Falls Board of Trade, "That it was the opinion of that Board that the interests of the town would be advanced if the present system of taxation were changed by taxing the land and dispensing with all taxes on the improvements thereon," caused a general discussion of the matter of taxation and called out forcible addresses by the mover and others, but was withdrawn to be re-introduced at some future meeting. Grand Falls did not ask Tax Reform of the Legislature this year.

Newcastle asked this year and was granted an Act by which its poll tax is fixed at $5.00 flat instead of having as formerly to be reckoned under the General Assessment Act which calls for the raising of one-sixth of the revenue by poll tax and which made Newcastle's poll tax last year $9.75. Campebellton's poll tax by special Act is $3.50, and that of St. John is lower still. Moncton's this year is $5.26.

No other legislation of any importance in Tax Reform was obtained from the New Brunswick Assembly this year. Campbellton, which asked in 1912 for the right to exempt improvements upon a majority vote of the people, and Moncton which asked, the same year, for permission to gradually exempt improvements, both requests being refused, will probably make similar demands at the coming session.

In Newcastle Council last winter a motion to ask for legislation authorizing gradual exemption of improvements, should the people be willing, was defeated by a vote of 5 to 3.

St. John, which has Direct Legislation within wide limits under a commission form of government which seems to be working successfully, is thinking seriously of installing the Somers system of valuation and going a considerable length in the direction of abolishing all taxes but those on land, at the same time preserving to all citizens the right to vote.

The New Brunswick Assessment Act authorizes the exemption of the first $200 of income. In St. John the first $300 is exempted, and in Moncton $600, both being very much behind Halifax, where $1000 is exempted. But in few, if any, of our towns and counties is income fully assessed, the practice however, working out so that the smaller the income the more nearly the law is carried out in full and the larger the income the more of it escapes.

At the meeting of the Maritime Board in Newcastle, on the 20th inst., the following motion (similar to that adopted by the Union of New Brunswick Municipalities at its convention in Newcastle in 1911. but not followed up by the Executive, nor considered at the 1912 convention) received much support and evoked a general and vigorous discussion in which not one of the speakers advocated the retention of our present system of taxation:—

"Be it resolved: That this Maritime Board of Trade assembled in convention in the town of Newcastle request the Government and Legislatures of the Maritime Provinces to pass at their next sessions bills providing that any county, city or town in their respective provinces shall, upon a majority vote of the qualified ratepayers voting, have the power to reduce or abolish, within its jurisdiction, taxes on polls, improvements, personal property and income, or any one or more of these, and raise its revenue by means of a Land Tax with or without a poll tax and with or without a system of business Licenses, also that copies of this resolution be sent to the Provincial premiers and opposition leaders."

After being thoroughly discussed, the matter was adjourned, and finally the following amendment, moved by Hon. Donald Morrison of Newcastle and Smith L. Walker, M. D., of Truro, was adopted:—

"That this Board recognizing the general dissatisfaction that exists with respect to the distribution of the burden of civic and municipal taxation, particularly with respect to arriving at a correct valuation of personal property and income, memorializes the Local Government to appoint commissions at their next meetings to investigate the grievances complained of with a view to providing a remedy; also that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governments concerned."

It is to be hoped that the Governments of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island will take action in this matter as soon as possible, and that its commission appointed last year by Nova Scotia will report at an early date.

Regretting that I am unable to attend the Fourth Convention and hoping that much progress will be made this coming year.

I am your obedient servant,

HENRY HARVEY STUART,
Vice-President for N. B.

Newcastle, N. B. August 30, 1912.

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